

GENETICS SOCIETY OF AMERICA

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY

UPTON, L. I., NEW YORK

July 15, 1952

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Lederberg:

The following statement is the one used by you in 1950:

"No scientist can view the current threats to individual and scientific freedom without great apprehension. We must be careful, however, to react creatively to these threats rather than to build our own intellectual prisons. In particular, the Committee on Public Education and Scientific Freedom should scrupulously avoid any statements which might be construed as an official scientific doctrine. When necessary, public assertions as to scientific claims or generalizations should be released by named individuals rather than the official committee, since the public will interpret statements from the committee as if they carried the endorsement of the society.

The Committee should sponsor public educational activities related to genetics in the sense of encouraging their organization and execution by prominent and qualified individuals. However, it should not, as an official body, endorse the content of such presentations any more than the Society endorses the content of the papers presented at the Jubilee meeting.

The distinction between representations on behalf of the Committee alone, and on behalf of the Society, is rather tenuous, since most of its members are elected by the Society on the basis of their stated views. The Committee must be responsible to the Society and should report to and ask instructions from it as frequently as feasible.

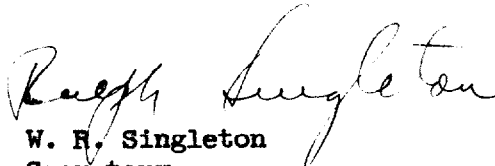
The suppression of scientists is a far greater threat than the attempted perpetration of bad science. If, in a not unprecedented pattern, the Soviet Union were to reverse its position and erect Mendelism as official doctrine, we should not lessen our opposition to the technique of persecution of nonconformists. It is to authoritarian imposition rather than to the details of the doctrine imposed that the Committee should address its major effort of opposition.

With these qualifications, I wholeheartedly support the recommendations of the special advisory committee "of nine".

Do you wish to amend it in any way for use this year? The other nominee, Curt Stern, submitted a very brief statement. Could you shorten yours any and reduce the number of paragraphs? We will use it as is if that is what you prefer.

Since I hope to get out a mailing on July 28, would you let me know promptly regarding this.

Sincerely yours,


W. R. Singleton
Secretary

WRS:ia